(a) the amount of income tax and Central excise duties outstanding against 10 big industrial and commercial units of the country for 2002-03; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to recover the dues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(b) Recovery of tax is a continuous process, involving the use of statutory provisions which include charging of interest, levy of penalty, attachment and sale of movable/immovable properties. In respect of cases where stay orders against recovery have been passed by the appellate bodies, special measures are taken to file petitions for urgent hearing or for deciding the cases on priority. Periodical review and monitoring of cases involving high demands are also regularly undertaken at various levels and necessary instructions are issued from item to time for effecting recovery of the outstanding taxes.

Circulation of currency notes/coins

†1714. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are going to stop circulation of some currency notes;

(b) whether Government have withdrawn the 5 and 10 paise coins from circulation; and

(c) the reasons for not accepting the 5 and 10 paise coins by businessmen in the market and the action being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) There is general reluctance for acceptance of low value coins like 5 paise and 10 paise. However, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has instructed all the commercial banks to accept the small coins from the public. In a Press release issued recently, RBI has also clarified that the small coins of 5, 10 and 20 paise denominations continue to be legal

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

tender and should be accepted by all concerned for payment and exchange.

Income tax exemption to political parties

†1715. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to exempt the financial receipts by political parties from income-tax and;

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per the present provisions of Sections 13A of the Income-tax Act, 1961, income from House Property, Capital gains, income from Other Sources and income by way of voluntary contributions, accruing to the political parties, are exempt from income tax, subject to the fulfilment of conditions specified therein.This Section applies to those political parties which are registered with the Election Commission of India under paragraph 3 of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 or which are deemed to be registered under the proviso to sub-paragraph-2 of the aforesaid paragraph.

Assessment of Income-tax

716. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Income Tax Assessing Officers at the first stage of assessment raise undue demands, which are quashed at the subsequent stages;

(b) whether it causes not only harassment to the assessees but creates additional work for the Income Tax department; and

(c) in what manner Government propose to make the assessing officers more accountable for their orders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) to (c) It is not a general trend of raising undue demands, but there are cases where demands raised by

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